

Appl. No. : 09/750,742
Filed : December 28, 2002

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action mailed May 13, 2004. In response thereto Applicants have filed this Preliminary Amendment along with a Request for Continued Examination.

By the Office Action, the Examiner indicated the rejection of Claims 47, 48 and 50 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Takemoto (USPN 5,807,177), the rejection of Claims 53-56 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Marnell II (USPN 5,259,613), and the rejection of Claims 49, 51 and 52 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Takemoto in further view of Weiss (USPN 5,611,730), Gabrius et al. (USPN 5,113,990) and Lucero (USPN 5, 457,306), respectively.

Applicants thank the Examiner for the detailed explanation of the grounds of rejection, including comments regarding Applicants' previous arguments.

Applicants have amended independent Claims 47 and 53 and assert they recite patentable subject-matter.

With respect to independent Claim 47, the Examiner indicated that Takemoto's structure anticipates this claim, notwithstanding Applicants' argument that the gaming machine as claimed having two displays is for use by a single player, while Takemoto discloses multiple displays which are viewable by a single player, though those displays are associated with different gaming machines per se.

Applicants have amended Claim 47 to clearly distinguish the present invention over Takemoto. As amended, Claim 47 recites a game station having a wager accepting device, a first game controller adapted to present first wagering game information on a first display and a second

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game controller adapted to present second wagering game information on a second video display in response to the wager placed by the player, and at least one player input device permitting the player to provide input to the game station affecting the first and second gaming information presented to the player by the first and second display.

As asserted previously, Takemoto teaches a plurality of gaming machines which are positioned in a side-by-side relationship. Each gaming machine comprises a chair A and display B. In this configuration, when a player places a wager, that player is presented a game on only the single associated display B. As claimed, the game stations is configured to present game content to a player on two different displays. In addition, the game station is configured to receive input from a player for playing the games presented via those two displays. In Takemoto, the player uses the controls at the chair A to play only the game presented at the single associated display B.

Independent Claim 53 is believed allowable over Marnell II. As amended, Claim 53 recites a game station having a first game controller adapted to present information regarding a first wagering game on a first display, a second game controller adapted to present information regarding a second wagering game on a second display, and a first video selector adapted to provide non-gaming video data from a video feed to either the first or second display, whereby a player may view first and second game information on the first and second displays while at the same time watching the video presented on one of the same displays presenting the first and second game information.

Applicants assert that Marnell II does not disclose such a configuration. At most, Marnell II teaches providing a display presenting dedicated video content from a remote location. Marnell II

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does not teach or suggest providing two gaming controllers for independently providing game content at first and second displays, as well as a video controller for providing video content at one of those displays.

Claims 48-52 and 54-56 are believed allowable for the reason that they depend from an allowable independent claim. These claims are, however, also believed independently allowable.

Applicants maintain their position relative to Claim 51. Claim 51 recites a game station having two ends and a console portion positioned above a base portion. A housing is located between the console and the second end of the housing. The housing houses two wager accepting devices for the play stations at opposing sides of the station.

The Examiner both indicated that Applicants' previous arguments were not commensurate with the claim language and that the configuration was a matter of design choice.

First, Applicants assert that the claim language clearly defines over the configuration of Gabrius, which does not teach two wager accepting devices or positioning of such devices in a housing which is positioned between a console portion of the gaming machine and end of the machine.

Second, Applicants assert that the configuration is not simply a matter of design choice. Applicants assert that this configuration has unexpected advantages. Applicants assert that the expected configuration for "back-to-back" gaming machines would be for those machines to be non-symmetrical. In other words, the accepted configuration for back-to-back machines is for all of the components of both machines to be in the same location for each player's use. For example, in the

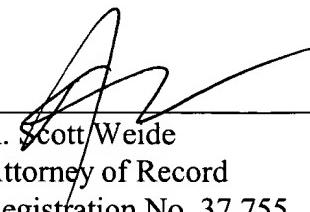
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case of machines such as Gabrius, if the machines were located back-to-back and faced in opposing directions, the reel pull handle for both machines would be positioned on the right-hand side of the machine. In accordance with the invention, the game station is configured so that it is symmetric: the housing which accommodates both wager accepting devices is, relative to the player areas at opposing sides of the station (see Figure 1), on different sides when viewed by a player at each of the two areas of the machine. This configuration advantageously permits consolidation of these components of the game station into a related space and contributes to the overall minimal size/configuration and complexity of the station.

Summary

Applicants assert that Claims 47-56 are in a condition for allowance and respectfully requests a notice as to the same. If any matters remain outstanding, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone.

Respectfully submitted,

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